

**Remarks**

**Status of Claims:**

Claims 8-12 are pending for examination.

**Drawings:**

As per paragraph 2 of the outstanding office action, a substitute sheet is submitted herewith in which Fig. 9 has been labeled as "Prior Art."

Further, applicant has noted an error in Fig. 7. The rightmost USB interface is now labeled 1-2 (instead of 1-1) since the middle interface is already labeled 1-1. Further, this change comports to the written description as originally filed on page 15, line 7.

**Title Change:**

As per paragraph 3 of the outstanding office action, the title of the invention has been changed to be more descriptive of the claimed invention.

**Claim Objection:**

The basis for the objection to claim 4 has been removed.

**Claim Rejection:**

Claim 12 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112 as being indefinite for the reasons stated in paragraph 6 of the outstanding office action. Claim 12 has now been amended to clarify the claim and to remove the basis for the rejection.

All of applicant's claims are deemed to fully comply with the provisions of 35 U.S.C. 112

**Prior Art Rejections:**

Claim 8 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by applicant's admitted prior art (AAPA). Further, claims 9-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over applicant's admitted prior art (AAPA).

The examiner's rejections are respectfully traversed.

Applicant's admitted prior art, as shown in figure 9, has several disadvantages which are discussed in the specification on pages 1-4 and in particular on pages 3-4. Applicant's modular construction is intended to solve the problems of the prior art and to permit the user of the interface to carry the minimum amount of components necessary which results in the device having the least

amount of weight and bulkiness and further in a device which requires the fewest amount of cables. As such, each of applicant's interface modular units shown in figure 7 is itself composed of a simple structure and includes expansion slots so that the individual modular units may be connected together without a cable therebetween. In other words, modular unit 2-1 may be directly connected to modular unit 12-1 without a cable therebetween as shown in figure 7. Moreover, the electrical/electronic device 2 may be connected to any one of the USB connectors 2-1, 2-2 and 2-3 and in so doing the USB hub in conjunction with the selectors 13-1 and 13-2 will permit the electrical/electronic product 2 to be connected to any one of the peripheral equipment devices including the USB peripheral equipment 24-1 and the more general (non-USB) peripheral equipment 22-1 and 22-2. See for example, applicant's specification as originally filed on page 16 beginning at line 3.

In order to make the above-enumerated points more clearly specified in applicant's claims, applicant has amended independent claims 8 and 12 and has added a new claim 13.

Claim 8 now recites that the USB interface comprises "a single conversion circuit" which converts the USB signal into an external interface signal that is transmitted to and received from the general peripheral device. Further, as to claim 8, applicant's expansion connector directly connects the USB signal to at least one other expansion connector of at least one other USB interface without a cable connection therebetween. It is submitted that the above enumerated amendments clearly differentiate applicant's invention from the AAPA shown in figure 9. Applicant's AAPA does not disclose a modular arrangement in which the USB interface comprises a single conversion circuit nor does it disclose the expansion connector for directly connecting the USB signal to at least one other expansion connector of at least one other USB interface. As such, it is submitted that applicant's AAPA does not anticipate applicant's invention.

With regard to claim 12, applicant has amended this claim in order to better differentiate applicant's invention from the AAPA. In particular, as in claim 8, applicant has made it clear that the first USB interface comprises a single conversion circuit. Moreover, the first USB interface has a first expansion connector for directly connecting to the second USB interface without a cable therebetween. Further, the second USB interface is recited to have a second expansion connector for directly connecting to the first expansion connector of the first USB interface without a cable therebetween.

It should be clear from the recitations of claim 12, that the first USB interface corresponds to interface 1-1 (since it recites the single conversion circuit corresponding to conversion circuit 13-1) and the second USB interface corresponds to the USB interface 12-1 (since it recites that hub 11-1).

In view of the amendments made hereto it is submitted that applicant's amended claim 12 clearly defines applicant's invention over AAPA and is patentable thereover.

With regard to claim 13, applicant points out that the recitations of this claim adds a third USB interface. This third USB interface corresponds to interface 1-2 in figure 7. Inasmuch as claim 13 depends on claim 12, it is submitted that claim 13 is patentable at least for the same reasons indicated above with regard to claim 12 from which it depends.

It is submitted that the application is now in condition for allowance and an early indication of same is earnestly solicited.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

By 

Date: October 25, 2004

FOLEY & LARDNER LLP  
Washington Harbour  
3000 K Street, N.W., Suite 500  
Washington, D.C. 20007-5109  
Telephone: (202) 672-5407  
Facsimile: (202) 672-5399

David A. Blumenthal  
Attorney for Applicant  
Registration No. 26,257